



the beech
housing
association newsletter

The newsletter for customers of the Beech Housing Association Summer 2008. 1st Edition

**ADACTUS GROUP
RESIDENTS AWAY
DAY 2008
SEE FLYER INSIDE!**

**An introduction to our new
Neighbourhood Development
and Financial Inclusion Officers**

See Pages 2 & 3

**All you need to know about
the Planned Maintenance
Programme 2008-2009**

See Page 6



This document is available in
other languages, larger text
and on audio cd or cassette.



Welcome to the 1st Edition of our new Newsletter that's just for Beech Housing Association Residents!

Your news, Your views! Let us know what you think of your new newsletter

Thank you for reading our first newsletter that is exclusively for Beech Housing Association residents. We decided that in addition to the InHouse magazine that goes out to all of our residents, we would create a newsletter just for Beech Housing Association residents with relevant information on what's happening within your subsidiary.

Let us know if you enjoyed reading the newsletter or if you have any suggestions for the next edition. We are

also looking for inventive ideas for the name of our new newsletter, **so please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01942 608715 if you have any ideas?**

If you would like to join the Adactus Group Editorial Panel and get involved in the next edition of the Beech Housing Association Newsletter or speak to us about any of the above **please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01942 608715 for further information.**

Beech Financial Inclusion Officer



With petrol and food prices rising all the time it is clear that more and more people are under pressure and beginning to struggle financially. As a provider of affordable housing Beech are particularly concerned that shared owners, especially those coming off a fixed rate deal, may be unable meet their mortgage payments and rent payments

Beech is now providing a Financial Inclusion Service which can offer help to shared owners and leaseholders. The service, which is funded by the Royal Bank of Scotland, aims to offer free and impartial advice on benefits and financial matters. Our experienced staff can perform a full financial review and ensure you are maximizing your income and are able to meet your outgoings.

If you would like to know more about the service, or feel that you would benefit from this, **please contact the Beech Financial Inclusion Officer, Alun Bellas, on 01942 263630.**

Leaseholder's Handbook

The new and improved Beech Leaseholders' and Shared Owners' Handbook was launched in June 2008.

As well as being distributed to all current Leaseholders and Shared Owners, the Handbook is now provided on the completion of the sale of any Beech property.

The Handbook provides an update on Beech's Policies and Procedures and has a wealth of useful information. The Handbook contains important information about the lease agreement, rents, service charges, re-sales and the staircasing process. Together with explanations about mortgages, insurance and maintaining your home.

If you have not received your copy of the Handbook yet then **please contact the Beech Leasehold Housing Officer, Lesley Houghton, on 01942 263 630.**



Gardening Service

At the end of May we wrote to all residents who receive the Grounds Maintenance Service from the Adactus Housing Group to inform them of the level of service that is presently provided and notify them of additional enhanced levels that could be available.

We included a calendar to illustrate the days when the fortnightly summer maintenance service visits are undertaken, and also show the amount of time the Grounds Maintenance operatives are to be on site.

A reply slip was also included within this package asking residents for their feedback on the current gardening standard and level of service provided. Comments received are being addressed and where necessary residents will receive a reply.

An invitation to form a Residents Forum dealing solely with the Grounds Maintenance Service was also included with each letter and this has received an excellent response. All returned comments slips are presently being collated to enable the development of a full satisfaction questionnaire which will be provided to these same residents later in the year.



New Staff Role at Your Area Office!

We now have 3 Neighbourhood Development Officers (NDO's) based at each of the area offices, North, South and West.

The NDOs will be working with the community and alongside other organisations to tackle neighbourhood issues. Project ideas so far include alley-gating, cleanup days, recycling projects, youth projects and much more! If you would like to find out about projects in your area, or if you have any ideas about improving your neighbourhood, please contact your local NDO.



Anne Corrigan, North Area
Tel: 0161 230 4070
Email: anne.corrigan@adactushousing.co.uk



Natalie Myers, South Area
Tel: 0161 232 6030
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Ruth Mycock, West Area
Tel: 01942 263 630
Email: ruth.mycock@adactushousing.co.uk

Resident Involvement At Beech is Working!

To date in 2008, through Beech Customer Involvement Panel, we have consulted residents on a range of areas including maintenance, rent and lettings issues. We consult on all key documents including policies and leaflets. For policies, we ask you for your views on how we should deliver a service. For leaflets and other information, we ask you to be a 'Reader', concentrating on whether it is understandable and includes all the information that is needed. You can get involved in a number of ways including via post, working party meetings, website and telephone calls.

See below for some of the areas that we have consulted on so far in 2008, including a short summary and brief description of outcomes. We provide more detail of outcomes of consultation in our Beech Focus News, which is a feedback newsletter. If you would like to receive a copy or want to know how you can be involved in the future **please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01942 608 715.**

NAME OF CONSULTATION	DATE	SUMMARY	OUTCOME
Anti-Social Behaviour Statement	Jan 2008	We have put together a 'Statement' of our Policy and Procedure for residents.. This document is effectively a shorter version of the policy and procedure, presented in a way which makes it more accessible.	'Readers' approved this with a few minor wording changes
Tenants Handbook	Mar 2008	Tenants handbook consultation sent out to 300 new tenants to review the handbooks usefulness	A new handbook is now in the process of being designed and will be issued to new tenants when the sign up to a property.
Repairs and Maintenance Working Party	Apr 2008	To consult with residents about a range of repair and maintenance issues including voids, repair timescales and repairs pre-inspections	The repairs acknowledgement letter was amended (see article for more detail)
Starter Tenancy Agreement	May 2008	Review of starter tenancy agreement to make sure that it is clear and understandable document	Tenant Focus 'Readers' approved this with some wording changes
Maintenance contractor interview panel	June 2008	The process of choosing an external contractor to deliver our kitchen and bathroom refurbishment programme from 2008 to 2011	From your feedback we re-prioritised the interview questions and a resident took part in the interviews. (see article for more detail)

As well as the above consultations, which just involved Beech HA tenants, we have also involved residents from across the Housing Group in consulting on several major policies, which also apply to Adactus HA and Chorley CH. Information on this will be in the next edition of INHOUSE, the magazine for all residents of Adactus Housing Group.... Coming out soon!

Repairs & Maintenance Working Party

In May we held our first AHA and BHA Repairs and Maintenance Working Party meeting. So far we have consulted with customers on Responsive Repairs issues including the Repairs Acknowledgement Letter, Tenant Involvement in Voids, Repair Timescales, and Repairs Pre-Inspections. Following resident's suggestions the Repairs Acknowledgement Letter has been revised and residents agreed that the new layout is much better. Also from residents suggestions the Pre-Inspection and Repair timescales have been re-prioritised and a proposal for changes is due to be submitted to Board for approval.

The next meeting is due to be held on the 1st September and we will shortly be consulting on the revised Repairs Policy. If you are interested in joining the working party, either attending meetings or via postal consultations, or would simply like some more information **please contact Becky Horton on the Resident Involvement Team on 01942 608715.**

Income Management

The aim of the Income Management Working Party is to review AHA and BHA financial management procedures. In our first meeting we consulted with tenants on reviewing current rent collection procedures and our rent arrears strategy, this meeting was then followed up with a postal consultation. We will feedback outcomes from the meeting and postal consultation in subsequent publications.

If you are interested in being part of any of the AHA and BHA Working Party's mentioned **please contact any member of the Resident Involvement team on 01942 608 715.**

We want YOU, our customers, to get involved in our new Mystery Shopping project

As a Mystery Shopper you will become empowered to directly assess and improve the services you receive. Customers who choose to become a Mystery Shopper are trained to the highest standard to either make phone calls or write letters to staff on subjects that test our response to given situations. Shoppers may, for example, report a repair, or write in to see how a complaint is dealt with. Your experiences will then be used to develop an action plan and put right any issues raised. Mystery Shops will take place two or three times per year and will only take up to 1 to 2 hours per shop.

If you would like to be involved **please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01942 608 715 and help us improve our service to you.**



We need more residents to join Beech HA Board

Could you get involved with the Association at this level? It's a unique and responsible position but you might be surprised by how much you could contribute. Together with your valuable experience of being a Beech customer, you probably have other really useful skills and experience and we will provide inhouse training to help you. Meetings are held at convenient times, so whatever your circumstances, why not find out more about what's involved? **Contact a member of the Resident Involvement Team on 01942 608 715 to express an interest.**

Planned Maintenance Contractors Consultation

In June our Planned Maintenance department interviewed potential external contractors to deliver our planned programme for replacing kitchens and bathrooms from 2008-2011. As part of this process we consulted residents on what questions you wanted us to ask the contractors during the interviews. From your feedback we re-prioritised the interview questions to reflect the issues you said were important to you.

Carol Hutchinson, a resident at Springbank Court was selected at random from the responses to sit on the Interview Panel. Carol said "I really enjoyed it being part of the panel. It was a very interesting and educational experience seeing how the process works from the 'other side'."



Contact our Resident Involvement Team if you want to get involved:



Lorraine Black, Resident Involvement Officer
Tel: 01942 608 715
Email: lorraine.black@adactushousing.co.uk



Becky Horton, Resident Involvement Officer
Tel: 01942 608715
Email: becky.horton@adactushousing.co.uk



Pamela Barlow, Resident Involvement Administration Assistant
Tel: 01942 608715
Email: pamela.barlow@adactushousing.co.uk

Sam Evans, Charlie Barlow and Suzannah Robinson are on maternity leave.



Mark Greenhalgh, Resident Involvement Manager
Tel: 01457 762 735 (answering machine outside office hours)
Email: mark.greenhalgh@adactushousing.co.uk



Jude Milburn, Resident Involvement Officer
Tel: 01942 608 715
Email: jude.milburn@adactushousing.co.uk



Kate Eastwood, Resident Involvement Officer
Tel: 01257 414922 or 01942 608715
Email: kate.eastwood@adactushousing.co.uk

Planned Maintenance Programme 2007-2008

This year £232,000 has been set aside for Planned Maintenance Decent Homes Works. In the following programme, you can check whether your street is listed as having any work done up until April 2009, and if so, how many properties on each street are affected.

In response to concerns raised by residents, this year a larger proportion of work is taking place on a street by street basis. This has increased the efficiency of our programme and is a fairer system to include all properties on a particular street at the same time.

Please note, on streets listed as "all", they are a handful of properties that have already had the improvement works carried out in the last year. By listing it as "all" properties we are indicating that all of the properties on that street have had improvement works carried out to meet the Decent Home Standard.

Also, please bear in mind that the programme does change regularly, and so your property may be included after this article has gone to press. Updated programmes are available to view on our internet site, along with planned works programmes up to 2010/11.

If you are listed as having an improvement this year then we will write to you prior to the works commencing to make the final arrangements for the contractors to call giving at least 4 weeks notice.

If you have any questions about the Planned Maintenance Programme and how it affects your property, just contact your Local Area Office.

BEECH PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2008-2009

ADDRESS	IMPROVEMENT	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES
Bennison Court	Central Heating	4
Carders Close	Central Heating	2
Hazel Court	Windows	All
Hurstwood	Central Heating	16
New Fort Way	Kitchens	15
Willow Court	Windows	All

Pinpoint Partnership



Pinpoint is a partnership between the 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities and 13 Housing Associations. It gives customers the chance to move from one area to another area within Greater Manchester. This can be for whatever reason - whether it is to be nearer family or work or simply to live in a different type of home.

Pinpoint will give those people registered to be re-housed with any of the participating landlords more choice of home. Customers only need register once with their local authority or landlord to access all Pinpoint properties.

This new service recently went live on 1st July 2008. Available properties will be advertised via the website.

For more information contact your local housing office or visit the website www.pinpoint.org.uk



Immersion heater alert



There has been considerable media coverage recently following the tragic death of a ten month old baby following an immersion heater fault.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has put some information together about a rare, but potentially serious, scalding risk from domestic hot water systems. The HSE information referred to above can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2007/e07027.htm> by phoning the HSE Infoline 0845 345 0055

Occupants should be aware of warning signs (such as excessive noise from the hot water cylinder or excessive hot water coming from the hot water taps) indicating possible thermostat failure and overheating of the water in the cylinder.

We are working to check all suspect immersion heaters in tenanted properties and to modify them where necessary.

The majority of the checks will be carried out during the annual gas safety visit. To find out when your gas service is due and **to make an appointment to have it done please call 01942 267808.**

However if any of the warning signs above are evident please contact your local Area Housing Office without delay and they will carry out the necessary checks.

Leaseholders can contact their Housing office for the name of an Adactus approved contractor who will be able to help.

West Area Officer Patches

- Andy Edwards Housing Officer**
Leigh, Ince, Hindley Green, Tyldesley, Atherton, Warrington, Ashton, Astley, Bickershaw, Golborne.
- Claire Merwin Housing Officer**
(TSH and HAMA properties) Wigan, Southport, Lancaster, Preston, Chorley, Leigh, St Helens, Tyldesley, Hindley, Haydock, Maghull.
- Colin Carr Housing Officer**
(Wesley House, Lancaster) Lancaster (and area), Morecambe, Preston.
- Carol Hewitt Housing Officer**
Housing Officer for (Homeworking) Chorley, Southport, Ainsdale, Bury, Ribble Valley, Maghull, Crosby.
- Stephen Hewitt Housing Officer**
Sales and Whelley, Wigan, Pemberton, Hindley, Leigh, Newton le Willows, Bootle and Maghull

Contact our West Area Office


82 Railway Road, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 4AN
T (01942) 263 630 F (01942) 677 567


Beech Housing Officer Patches


- Lesley Houghton Housing Officer**
Wigan, Leigh, St Helens, Earlstown, Warrington, Lowton, Macclesfield, Urmston, Crumpsall, Over Hulton, Blackley, Golborne, Tyldesley, Howe Bridge, Ince, Morecambe, Lancaster, Winsford, Levenshulme, Chorley, Frodsham, Burnage, Preston, Whelley, Sale, Hindley.
- Carol Hewitt Housing Officer**
Housing Officer for all General Needs schemes within Sefton.
Tel: 01254 832 650
- Claire Mathias Housing Officer**
4 x Sheltered schemes, 6 x Cat 1 schemes, 1 x Leasehold scheme (all within Sefton).
Tel: 0161 203 2927


Contact Beech Housing Association


Turner House, 56 King Street, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 4LJ
T (01942) 608 715 F (01942) 677 567


 عربي
حدد اللغة التي تتحدثها .
سوف نستدعي مترجماً على الهاتف لمعاونتنا .


 ગુજરાતી
તમારી ભાષા તરફ આંગળીથી ઈશારો કરો.
આપણને મદદ કરવા માટે એક દુભાષિયાને અમે ટેલિફોન
પર બોલાવીશું.


 ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਲ ਦਿਸਾਰਾ ਕਰੋ।
ਅਸੀਂ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਾਂਗੇ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ
'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰੇ।


 বাংলা
আপনার ভাষাটি অঙ্গুলি নির্দেশ করে দেখান।
আমাদেরকে সহায়তা করার জন্য টেলিফোনে
আমরা একজন দো-ভাষী বা ইন্টারপ্রেটার এর
সহায়তা করব।


 हिन्दी
आपकी भाषा की ओर इशारा करें।
हमें सहायता करने के लिए एक दुभाषिये को हम टेलीफोन
पर बुलाएंगे।


 Soomaali
Farta ku tilmaam luqaddaada.
Waxaan telifoonka ku heli doonaa
turjibaan na caawiya


 廣東話
請指出您講的語言。
我們將請一位電話翻譯員
來幫助您。

 کوردی
پهنجه رابکێشه بۆ ئەو زمانە هێ قسهی پێدهکەیت.
ئێمه موتهرجییمیک پهیدا دهکەین تا به ته له فۆن
هاوکاریمان بکات.

 اردو
اپنی زبان کی طرف اشارہ کیجیے۔
ہماری مدد کرنے کیلئے ہم ٹیلی فون پر کسی ترجمان (انٹرپرائزر) کو بلائیں گے۔

 فارسی
زبانی را که صحبت میکنید نشان دهید
برای کمک، مترجم تلفنی تهیه خواهیم کرد.

 普通话 / 国语
请指出您讲的语言。
我们将请一位口译员在电话上翻译。

 Tiếng Việt
Hãy chỉ vào ngôn ngữ của quý vị.
Chúng tôi sẽ mời một thông dịch
viên qua điện thoại giúp chúng ta.

Head Office

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T (01942) 608 715

F (01942) 261 538

Xtracare Division

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T (01942) 608 715

F (01942) 261 538

Support Division

82 Railway Road, Leigh Lancs, WN7 4AN

T (01942) 263 630

F (01942) 677 567

West Area Office

82 Railway Road, Leigh Lancs, WN7 4AN

T (01942) 263 630

F (01942) 677 567

North Area Office

Elizabeth House, Victoria Street, Openshaw, Manchester, M11 2NX

T (0161) 2304070

F (0161) 2316248

South Area Office

Parkway 5, Parkway Business Centre, Princess Road, Manchester, M14 7HR

T (0161) 226 5384

F (0161) 232 9591

Miles Platting Office

Varley Street, Miles Platting, Manchester

T (0800) 234 6826

F (0161) 203 2927

BReathe+ Office

34 Eleanor Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 6BR

T (0151) 284 5756

F (0151) 922 2555

Chorley Head Office

Chorley Community Housing, 24-26 Gillibrand Street, Chorley, PR7 2EJ

T (01257) 414 900

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www.adactushousing.co.uk